

SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN AQUACULTURE SECTORS - CASE STUDIES OF TAMIL NADU, INDIA -

B. Shanthi*, M. Krishnan, A.G. Ponniah.

Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, (ICAR), 75, Santhome High Road, R.A. Puram, Chennai – 600 028, Tamil Nadu, South India. drshanthi@ciba.res.in

In many Asian countries, the rapid development of aquaculture has provided a lot of scope to involve a large number of people in its varied production components. Aquaculture offers one of the best livelihood options for women especially in coastal areas. The nature and the extent of involvement of women vary greatly from place to place, and within a place it varies among castes, religion and position in the family hierarchy.

The involvement of rural women in small scale aquaculture is considered important for augmenting fish production and to uplift the social and economic conditions of women. Urban male migration and other social problems have led to an increased number of permanently or temporarily women headed households. This also demands the involvement of rural women in all sorts of agricultural activities including aquaculture.

This study describes women who have taken up aquaculture as their avocation and discusses avenues of opportunities to get more women involved in this sector. These women also earn a significant income from these activities and increase their family income considerably. This study discusses various cases of successful women entrepreneurs in India who are engaged in shrimp farming, crab culture, crab fattening in cages, pens and concrete tanks, shrimp hatchery management, crab hatchery management, live feed farming and processing, shrimp processing, fish meal formulation and feed development, aqua by-products management and exports.

The study has made considerable effort to capture the existing and latent entrepreneurial talents of women in fisheries and aquaculture in Tamil Nadu, India. It has made efforts to cover various aspects such as facilitating and inhibiting factors, problems encountered at work and suggestions for improving their businesses.

As these women have demonstrated their ability to work successfully at all levels of the sector, it is important to continue to construct an environment conducive to their greater participation and benefit. More opportunities must be created. This can best be achieved at the global level, predominantly through the collection and dissemination of information and the transfer of technology among countries. Several on-going efforts specific to women in aquaculture development exist. It is important that these case-studies not only highlight the participation of women at all levels but also identify and resolve recurring issues and provide the foundation for formulating and planning future programmes for women.